

"While it is true that without a vision the people perish, it is doubly true that without action the people and their vision perish as well."

Johnetta B. Cole

Advocating for the Health of Our Communities

The Policy Agenda of the
African American 5 a Day Campaign Advisory Council

2003 - 2005



Introduction

The poor health status of African Americans is well documented and cited frequently. African American mortality rates for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and many cancers exceed the rates of any other major racial/ethnic group. While the underlying causes for these health disparities include poverty, racism, and disparities in health care quality, obesity, unhealthy nutrition, and lack of physical activity are major risk factors for the onset of many of the conditions that underlie the high mortality rates of African Americans.



The *California African American 5 a Day Campaign* was established to address these health disparities by:

Empowering low-income African American communities to promote the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity through education, advocacy, and policy development.

Guided by input and direction from the *African American 5 a Day Campaign* Advisory Council (referred to below as the Council), the *African American 5 a Day Campaign* provides support to and builds the capacity of African American organizations to improve the health of our communities by promoting the consumption of fruits and vegetables and increasing physical activity.

Guiding Principles

In its deliberations, the Council adopted the following principles to guide the development of its policy priorities:

- Health policies must promote the elimination of health disparities between African Americans and other racial/ethnic groups.

- Prevention is the required strategy for eliminating those health disparities.
- Faith institutions and faith-based interventions are essential elements of an overall strategy to improve the health of African American communities.
- Community empowerment is a critical factor in building healthy African American communities.
- Healthy nutrition and physical activity strategies, programs, and policies specifically designed for and targeting African Americans are essential.
- Strategies, programs, and policies that target the general population must also be culturally competent and reflect the ethnic diversity of California.



Policy Goals

The Council was strategic in its selection of policy priorities. It considered a wide variety of policy goals that would benefit African American communities and gave priority to those that were feasible given the resources and capacity of the Council. Accordingly, the Council adopted the following policy goals:

Goal 1: Enhance the availability, variety, affordability, and quality of fruits and vegetables accessible to African Americans by increasing the number of retail outlets, farmers' markets, and other sources of healthy foods in our communities.

City, county, special district, and other local agencies should use the zoning and economic development tools available to them to increase retail outlets that sell healthy foods and reduce the number of those serving foods with low nutritional value. Additionally, transportation planners should enhance transportation access to sources of healthy food.

Goal 2: Increase access to fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods by expanding the utilization of nutrition assistance programs, such as WIC, Food Stamp, and school nutrition programs, in African American communities.

The California Legislature, Department of Health Services, and Department of Social Services should enact policies and enhance outreach and marketing campaigns to increase enrollment in nutrition assistance programs and reduce enrollment barriers.

Goal 3: Enhance the role of public, private, and religious schools (pre-school through 12th grade) in promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity.

Public, private, and religious school governance bodies should adopt and enforce policies that promote consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods, restrict the availability of competing foods, strengthen nutrition education, and promote physical activity among students.

Goal 4: Increase the role of African American faith-based, community service, business, professional, media, and other organizations in promoting community awareness of the benefits of healthy nutrition and physical activity and promote behavior changes.

African American churches, sororities and fraternities, economic development, media, professional and advocacy organizations, and other community-based organizations should join the movement to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity by educating their members and constituents, serving healthy foods at their events, and promoting physical activity. They should also support advocacy efforts to create community and school environments that promote healthy nutrition and physical activity.



About us

About the California 5 a Day Campaign and California African American 5 a Day Campaign Advisory Council

The *California 5 a Day Campaign* is a statewide initiative led by the California Department of Health Services in cooperation with the National 5 A Day Program of the National Cancer Institute. The *California 5 a Day Campaign* is administered by the Public Health Institute, funded principally by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program, and is one of nearly 180 projects within the *California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families*. Its purpose is to empower Californians to eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day and be physically active at least 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for children. The fruit and vegetable and physical activity behavioral objectives are designed to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, especially cancer, heart disease, and obesity.

The *California African American 5 a Day Campaign* is one of five targeted initiatives within the *California 5 a Day Campaign*. The *Campaign* specifically works to empower low-income African American communities to promote the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity through education, advocacy, and policy development. The *Campaign* is guided by input and direction from the *African American 5 a Day Campaign Advisory Council*. The Council's membership consists of concerned California residents, community leaders, ministers, registered dietitians, nurses, doctors, and advocates.



Principal funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer, helping limited income Californians buy more nutritious foods for a healthier diet. For more information about Food Stamps, please call 1-800-952-5253.

For more information on how you can advocate for healthier African American communities, or for an extended version of this Policy Agenda, please visit our Web site at www.ca5aday.com.

